

§ 301-74.3

conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference. Some examples of such costs are:

- (a) Authorized travel and per diem expenses;
- (b) Hire of rooms for official business;
- (c) Audiovisual and other equipment usage;
- (d) Computer and telephone access fees;
- (e) Light refreshments;
- (f) Printing;
- (g) Registration fees;
- (h) Ground transportation; and
- (i) Employees' time at the conference and on en route travel.

§ 301-74.3 What must we do to determine which conference expenditures result in the greatest advantage to the Government?

To determine conference expenditures, you must:

- (a) Assure there is appropriate management oversight of the conference planning process;
- (b) Always do cost comparisons of the size, scope, and location of the proposed conference;
- (c) Determine if a Government facility is available at a cheaper rate than a commercial facility;
- (d) Consider alternatives to a conference, e.g. teleconferencing; and
- (e) Maintain written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale used.

§ 301-74.4 What should cost comparisons include?

Cost comparisons should include, but not be limited to, a determination of adequacy of lodging rooms at the established per diem rates, overall convenience of the conference location, fees, availability of meeting space, equipment, and supplies, and commuting or travel distance of attendees. (See Appendix E to Chapter 301, Guidance for Conference Planning.)

§ 301-74.5 How should we select a location and a facility?

Site selection is a final decision as to where to hold your conference. The term "site" refers to both the geographical location and the specific fa-

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cility(ies) selected. In determining the best site in the interest of the Government, you should exercise strict fiscal responsibility to minimize costs. The actions in § 301-74.3 must be followed. Cost comparisons must cover factors such as those listed in § 301-74.4. As part of the cost comparison, you must use the established per diem rate for the locations for which you are comparing costs.

§ 301-74.6 What can we do if we cannot find an appropriate conference facility at the chosen locality per diem rate?

While it is always desirable to obtain lodging facilities within the established lodging portion of the per diem rate for the chosen locality, it may not always be possible. In negotiating lodging rates with the properties in the chosen location, you may exceed the established lodging portion of the per diem rate by up to 25 percent under §§ 301-74.8 and 301-74.9, if necessary. This will provide flexibility in selecting an appropriate property at the most advantageous location. It will also permit agencies to reimburse their employees' subsistence expenses by using the conference lodging allowance method as prescribed in § 301-74.8 for a Government sponsored conference and in § 301-74.9 for non-Government sponsored conferences, rather than the actual expense method prescribed in subpart D of part 301-11 of this chapter.

§ 301-74.7 What is the conference lodging allowance?

The conference lodging allowance is a pre-determined maximum allowance of up to 25 percent greater than the applicable locality lodging portion of the per diem rate. Under this reimbursement method, employees will be reimbursed the actual amount incurred for lodging up to the conference lodging allowance.

§ 301-74.8 Who may authorize reimbursement of the conference lodging allowance for a Government sponsored conference?

The approval authority for the conference lodging allowance is the Government agency sponsoring the conference. The sponsoring agency will determine the appropriate conference

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lodging allowance, up to 25 percent above the established lodging allowance for the chosen location, and that rate shall be allowable for all employees of any agency authorized to attend the conference. The determination must be made by a senior agency official at the sponsoring agency.

§301-74.9 Who may authorize reimbursement of the conference lodging allowance for a non-Government sponsored conference?

The travel approving official of a Government employee authorized to attend a non-Government sponsored conference may authorize the employee to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred up to the conference lodging allowance rate.

§301-74.10 May the conference lodging allowance ever exceed 25 percent above the lodging per diem rate?

No, the conference lodging allowance may not exceed 25 percent above the applicable locality lodging per diem rate.

§301-74.11 May we provide light refreshments at an official conference?

Yes. Agencies sponsoring a conference may provide light refreshments to agency employees attending an official conference. Light refreshments for morning, afternoon or evening breaks are defined to include, but not be limited to, coffee, tea, milk, juice, soft drinks, donuts, bagels, fruit, pretzels, cookies, chips, or muffins.

§301-74.12 May we use both the conference lodging allowance method and the actual expense method of reimbursement concurrently?

No. You must only use one reimbursement method per day in accordance with §301-11.4 of this chapter.

§301-74.13 May we include conference administrative costs in an employee's per diem allowance payment for attendance at a conference?

No. Per diem is intended only to reimburse the attendee's subsistence expenses. You must pay conference registration fees separately, either directly or by reimbursing employees

who pay such expenses and submit travel claims.

§301-74.14 Are there any special requirements for sponsoring or funding a conference at a hotel, motel or other place of public accommodation?

Yes. When you sponsor or fund (see 15 U.S.C. 2225a), in whole or in part, a conference at a place of public accommodation in the United States, you must use an approved accommodation (see §300-3.1 of this title), except as provided in §301-74.15. This provision also applies to the government of the District of Columbia when it expends Federal funds for a conference and any non-Federal entity which uses Government funds to sponsor or fund a conference.

§301-74.15 May we waive the requirement in §301-74.14?

Yes, if the head of your agency makes a written determination on an individual case basis that waiver of the requirement to use approved accommodations is necessary in the public interest for a particular event. Your agency head may delegate this waiver authority to a senior agency official or employee who is given waiver authority with respect to all conferences sponsored or funded, in whole or in part, by your agency.

§301-74.16 What must be included in any advertisement or application form relating to conference attendance?

(a) Any advertisement or application for attendance at a conference described in §301-74.14 must include:

(1) Notice of the prohibition against using a non-FEMA approved place of public accommodation for conferences; and

(2) Notice that the conference lodging allowance applies to Federal attendees, if applicable.

(b) In addition, any executive agency, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, shall notify all non-Federal entities to which it provides Federal funds of this prohibition.